Secret

25X1

DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

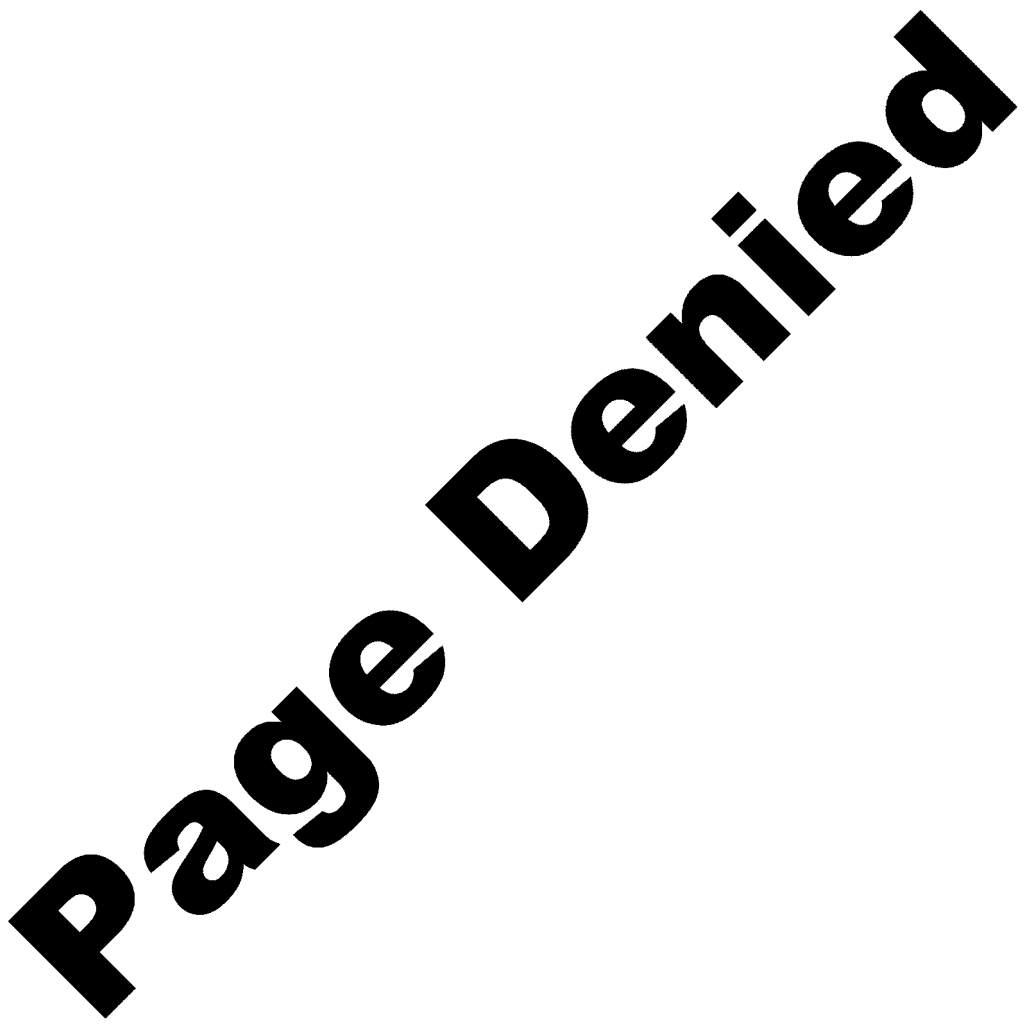
Poland's Changing Position in the Communist World

Secret

№ 37

12 January 1968
No. 0002/68A

Approved For Release 2006/12/07 : CIA-RDP79-00927A006200050004-7



POLAND'S CHANGING POSITION IN THE COMMUNIST WORLD

There has been a substantial change in Poland's domestic and foreign circumstances since the nationalistic "October Revolution" in 1956 and the coming to power of the Gomulka regime in the face of Soviet opposition. The retreat from the libertarian domestic innovations instituted in 1956 has proceeded to the point where Gomulka, formerly a barely tolerated outcast in the Communist world, is now considered Moscow's staunchest ally.

In terms of the Gomulka regime's goals, however, Poland is on course. It is more secure than ever in a firm anti-German alliance with the USSR, and it is influential in both the Communist and the Western worlds.

The Polish party's innovative principle of "unity within diversity" has become an accepted theoretical norm--even if not always applied--for most other Eastern European states. Some, like Rumania, have pursued diversity so far down the road to national independence that Poland today seems comparatively laggard, its policies stagnant and rigid. Awareness of this contrast has contributed to a growing restiveness among the Polish party and people alike, and constitutes a fundamental long-term threat to the stability of the Gomulka regime.

Gomulka's Poland--From Outcast to Ally

Since 1956, Gomulka has gradually won "Soviet acceptance of his ideas and policies by coordinating with Moscow his views on issues of primary importance to the USSR. Essentially, these issues have concerned foreign policy toward the West and mutual support within the Communist movement. In order to accomplish this, Gomulka was from the beginning required to reassert party control at home and to convince the Soviet leadership that his concept of "different roads to socialism" posed neither a threat to the Polish-Soviet alliance nor an ideological challenge to the USSR.

In the early months of the Gomulka regime, domestic policies were libertarian to an extent never experienced under Communism in any country. This permissiveness, however, owed less to Gomulka's convictions than to the

POLISH-SOVIET ACCOMMODATION

"...Relationships should be formed on a foundation of working class solidarity, based upon mutual trust and equality of rights, upon mutual aid, upon friendly criticism if such should prove necessary, and upon a rational solution, arising out of a spirit of friendship and socialism, of all controversial issues. In the past, unfortunately, this is not how it always was in the relations between us and our great and friendly neighbor--the Soviet Union."

Gomulka speech at eighth plenum PZPR, 21 October 1956

"Peoples Poland always was and continues to be the closest ally of the Soviet Union in its unabated efforts in the struggle for peace and the independence of peoples. In this struggle we are united by the general aims of socialism...and also by the most vital interests of both our countries."

Gomulka article in Soviet party daily Pravda, 29 October 1967

weakness of the party and the consequent instability of the Polish "experiment," as it was originally regarded. Gomulka moved rapidly, first to consolidate his own position, and then to gain Soviet confidence by rebuilding the party according to his own specifications. In the process, he gradually eliminated those liberal gains of 1956 which he had never favored and which were condemned throughout the Communist world. These moves involved purging both Stalinist and "revisionist" extremists from the party. It is a measure of Gomulka's basic conservatism that he has always considered the latter more dangerous.

To be successful, however, Gomulka's efforts at consolidation depended on a change in Soviet attitudes toward him. In October 1956, he barely avoided Soviet armed intervention. Today, he is vulnerable to charges that Moscow's friendly embrace is too stifling. Russian support for his initially "deviationist" views was years in coming, however, and involved an interacting process of Poland yielding to Soviet pressures and a concurrent mellowing in Moscow's view of what was possible and proper in its relations with Eastern European states.

Until late 1957, Gomulka refused to subscribe to Moscow's claims to primacy within the bloc and the Soviet party's insistence on unity on ideological issues. His refusal stemmed not from opposition to these postures as such, but from a fear that acceptance would compel full conformity in domestic policies as well. When Gomulka finally yielded--though not unequivocally--on the principle of Soviet primacy at the November 1957 multiparty conference in Moscow, he did so in return for guarantees of domestic party autonomy, which were applicable throughout the Communist world.

Although the conference endorsed the principle that all national Communist parties are co-equal, a significant Soviet concession that led Polish Premier Cyrankiewicz to declare "the Soviet Union is now on a path more or less parallel to Poland," the Poles nevertheless clearly viewed this Soviet move in guarded terms. By mid-1958, however, Gomulka seems to have received sufficient assurance about Moscow's good intentions

to concede the second point, unity on major ideological issues. He did so by joining in the Soviet denunication of the Yugoslav "revisionism" of the time and by endorsing the execution of rebel Hungarian premier Imre Nagy.

These developments were major turning points in Polish-Soviet relations and signaled a change in Moscow's attitude from grudging toleration to support. Soviet endorsement of Gomulka as a "great statesman," both at the 21st CPSU congress in February 1959 and during Khrushchev's visit to Poland the following July, ended the period of Warsaw's defensiveness toward Moscow and brought an increasingly positive Polish role in support of the USSR both within and outside the bloc.

Since 1959, the Soviet leaders have shown every sign of considering Gomulka primus inter pares in Eastern Europe. This has been demonstrated repeatedly not only in public displays of fraternal sentiment, but in frequent consultations prior to mutual policy decisions affecting both bilateral and intra-Communist relations. Gomulka's favored position was recently illustrated during the celebrations in Moscow of the 50th anniversary of the Soviet revolution, when he spoke immediately after Soviet party leader Brezhnev.

Significantly, Gomulka chose the Kremlin rostrum to reassert joint Polish-Soviet support for the principles of party autonomy and of solidarity against "imperialism." It is a measure of Gomulka's consistency that his statement in Moscow in November 1967 should echo so closely the principles of bloc relations he had first put forward in May 1957. It is a paradox, however, that the concept which made him a dangerous "deviationist" a decade ago should now be held out as a minimum requirement for restoring unity among states which Gomulka himself did so much to transform from a Soviet-dominated bloc to a badly splintered "socialist commonwealth."

INTER-PARTY RELATIONS

"The policy line...[should be]...in accordance with the Leninist principles of proletarian internationalism, the observance of the equality and sovereignty of all states and nations, and the unity of the socialist countries and forces to oppose imperialist aggression and to defend peace."

Gomulka speech at ninth plenum PZPR, 15 May 1967

"Every Communist party independently fixes its political line and is responsible for its policy before its nation and the working class and nobody can take this responsibility from it. But every Communist party, which within the framework of its own country implements or strives to implement the universal idea of socialism, must be characterized by proletarian internationalism.... Differences of views... should not undermine internationalist unity in the struggle against imperialism."

Gomulka speech at Kremlin, 3 November 1967

Gomulka--Pro-Soviet Nationalist

Because of Gomulka's accommodation with Moscow and the concurrent development of divisive tendencies in Eastern Europe,

Poland no longer appears to be a special case within the Communist world. On the contrary, Gomulka's increasingly close alliance with the USSR has made it seem to many that he has turned his back on the legacy of 1956 and is out of step with burgeoning nationalist trends elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

This view, however, mistakes appearances for reality. The forces of nationalism take differing paths in the countries of the region, and impel the Poles and others to employ differing methods.

Gomulka has always been deeply aware that his regime is ultimately dependent on strong Soviet support. Moreover, he has never seen any contradiction between Polish nationalism and a firm Polish-Soviet alliance, considering them mutually dependent. The strong alliance with the USSR is thus the foundation of Polish policy, and the test of loyalty in Gomulka's Poland is adherence to his pro-Soviet stance. Fundamentally as nationalistic as Rumania's Ceausescu, Gomulka understands Bucharest's aspirations, but he strongly differs over methods. Unlike Ceausescu, he has gained elbow-room for the pursuit of Poland's national interests by paying the price for Soviet consent in political compromises. Gomulka evidently is convinced that this approach will not only have more lasting benefits than Ceausescu's militancy, but will avoid further disunity within the Communist world.

Gomulka has acted in the belief that Poland does not have the option to pursue Rumanian-style independence without becoming a weak pawn in the power struggle in central Europe. He views Poland's alliance with the USSR as historically unavoidable, and as the only alternative to another of the national disasters which he believes have resulted from past Polish alliances with Western powers. His conviction on this score was most recently illustrated by his firm rejection of President de Gaulle's overtures during the latter's visit to Poland in September.

POLAND'S WORLD POSITION

"What would Poland mean in the Western alliance?... It would occupy a lowly place, after England, Germany, France, and Italy in Europe, and dozens of other states on a world scale.... In the socialist camp, the proportions are reversed: Poland, as the largest People's Democracy, is third on the list of socialist states after the Soviet Union and China, and second in Europe."

Pro-regime Catholic daily Slowo Powszechne
22 March 1958

"It is our duty to tell you how we see our role in the building of European security, our tasks and our place in Europe. In the period between the two world wars, Poland and France were linked with a political and military alliance. For many reasons, which I shall not mention today, the alliance functioned badly...and did not save either Poland or France from the catastrophe of defeat....

"Reborn Poland has drawn all the conclusions from its historical experience...the entering on the road of friendship and alliance with its great Eastern neighbor, the Soviet Union. This alliance...is the cornerstone of the policy of the Polish People's Republic and the basic guarantee of its security. [It] made it possible for Poland to find its permanent and important place in Europe, a place which our fatherland has been unsuccessfully seeking since the 18th century."

Gomulka's parliamentary speech in reply to visiting French President De Gaulle,
11 September 1967

National Interests Versus Communist Solidarity

After a firm Polish-Soviet alliance, Gomulka views Communist solidarity--with deference to national aspirations--as the second major building block of his policies. His near-obsession with "unity in the face of imperialism" is rooted in the fear that further diversity within the movement, especially in Eastern Europe, will ultimately affect the cohesion of the Polish-Soviet alliance, and hence, Poland's security. He thus believes that the Chinese and some Eastern European leaders lean too heavily on nationalism as the foundation of state policy to the detriment of the security to be gained from a stable, pro-Soviet, "socialist commonwealth."

The expression of Eastern European nationalism evidently assumed alarming proportions in Gomulka's view in February 1967, when Rumania established diplomatic relations with West Germany in disregard of Polish and East German interests. Hungary, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia seemed ready to follow suit immediately. Bucharest's move caused Gomulka to join with East Germany's Ulbricht and the USSR's Brezhnev in a multifaceted effort to bolster Eastern European solidarity against Bonn's initiatives. As a result, a series of new or renewed mutual security treaties was concluded between Eastern European countries. These pacts do not bind any regime in the area to a common policy against West Germany, however. The Gomulka regime's role in these efforts nonetheless has resulted in an unprecedented commitment by Poland to the support of East Germany.

Gomulka intensified his effort to rally Eastern Europe in support of his German policy later in 1967. In an article published in the 29 October issue of the Soviet party daily Pravda, he disregarded the well-known Soviet view that German reunification is a matter to be solved by Bonn and Pankow, asserting that the permanent division of Germany and support for East Germany accords with the vital interests of "all" peaceful nations. In public, at least, Gomulka's thesis has been ignored by the USSR and most Eastern Europeans, except for Hungary, which has issued what amounts to a rebuttal.

Gomulka's linking of Poland's European interests with those of East Germany is a potentially dangerous step. Moscow may fear that it will blight the chances for achieving Eastern European solidarity on this issue. Moreover, in the long term it could lead to the kind of diplomatic and political isolation of Poland that it was initially designed to

DIVISION OF GERMANY

"The division of Germany into two German states...does not contradict the interests of any European peoples. On the contrary, as long as the German Federal Republic continues to pursue its policy, headed yesterday by Adenauer and Erhardt and continued today--with the aid of new tactics--by Kiesinger's government, this division will correspond to the interests of all peace-loving peoples.

Gomulka article in Pravda
29 October 1967

prevent--an inevitable sequel if Moscow's interests in the future should dictate improved relations with Bonn.

The Sino-Soviet Dispute

In contrast to his sharp reactions to Eastern European assertiveness, Gomulka has exhibited a great deal more caution and patience in dealing with Chinese "great power chauvinism." His forbearance, however, does not stem from sympathy for Communist China, but from dissatisfaction with the way the Soviets have used the dispute to strengthen their claims to primacy within the Communist movement.

For nearly a year after Gomulka returned to power in 1956, his regime entertained hopes that the Polish "experiment" had the support of Peking, which at the time was engaged in Mao Tse-tung's "hundred flowers" campaign. The Poles apparently believed that Peking favored a relaxation of Soviet controls within the bloc and was, therefore, a possible source of support for Gomulka's principles of greater diversity and party autonomy. Although it was mainly the still-undisciplined Polish press that seized on Mao's thesis to press for democratization of Polish conditions, the regime was also pleased--for its own reasons. Both Gomulka and Premier Cyrankiewicz made statements in late 1956 referring to a "new center of creative Marxist thought" in Peking.

The abrupt wilting of Mao's "hundred flowers" in September 1957 was an unmistakable sign that Polish hopes for Chinese support were groundless. This was confirmed when Peking strongly supported Moscow in pressing Gomulka to accept the principle of Soviet primacy in the bloc at the multiparty conference in Moscow in November 1957.

The Gomulka regime's disillusionment with the Chinese brand of Communism probably changed to concern sometime during 1958 as Peking's support for Stalinism and its rejection of the concept of "peaceful coexistence" became clear. By June 1959, when Khrushchev used his visit to Poland not only to endorse

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

"The concept of unity...excludes the existence of one center and also of one privileged party capable of imposing its own views upon others. All parties are independent, autonomous.... Observance of this principle does not in the least negate the vanguard position of the CPSU in the world Communist movement."

Main theoretical party monthly, Nowe Drogi, January 1962

"Socialism...is always embodied in a specific national form bound to the historically formed conditions of the country in question.... These specific national features of every country taking the road of socialism can be the reason for differences in the approach of the forms and methods of building the new system.

"However, this should not break up their unity of their actions on basic questions, primarily in the struggle against imperialism, for the defense of the vital interests and the security of the socialist community, the defense of peace, progress, and the freedom of peoples."

Gomulka article in Pravda 29 October 1967

Gomulka may take some comfort in the fact that on 28 November Pravda avowed that an international meeting would not seek to "excommunicate" anyone, and rejected "interference in the affairs of a fraternal party." It remains far from clear, however, whether Moscow considers Gomulka's formula as sufficient to restore a modicum of unity under Soviet leadership.

The Mounting Challenge at Home

Gomulka's attempts in recent years to safeguard his accomplishments have cost him the genuine popular support that he commanded in 1956. The Polish people appear increasingly resentful of Poland's ever closer ties with the USSR at a time when other Eastern European regimes are loosening theirs, and unconvinced by Gomulka's explanations of this policy in terms of the German "danger" and the need for bloc unity.

This alienation has manifested itself most seriously in recurring periods of factional instability within the party, mainly on the issue of nationalism and specifically over the question of Polish-Soviet relations. Very few within the party question the need for a firm alliance with Moscow, but an increasing number of members believe that the extent of Gomulka's commitment to the USSR has deprived Polish policy of flexibility and initiative precisely when these are demanded by changing conditions both within and outside the bloc. This issue has increasingly tended to cut across factional lines and has contributed to Gomulka's difficulty in maintaining party stability.

By 1959 Gomulka had removed from positions of power and influence members of the extremist Stalinist and "revisionist" wings of the party. Since then, the conservative but pragmatic pro-Gomulka majority of the party has been flanked on the one hand by hard-line elements led by Interior Minister Moczar, and on the other by the politically weak but institutionally entrenched moderates with pro-Western leanings. Both of these groupings have nationalist overtones, but neither has yet exhibited significant internal cohesiveness or potential as alternatives to Gomulka. Both groups, however, periodically have used various issues and grievances to strengthen their influence with Gomulka and within the party-state apparatus. So far, Gomulka has skillfully maintained a factional balance, but only at the cost of squelching constructive dissent and causing a stagnation of policy.

The factional balance was seriously shaken in June 1967 as a result of Gomulka's support for Moscow's Middle East policy. Widespread pro-Israeli sentiment among the people contributed to turmoil within the party as many, including military elements, began to question the necessity of Gomulka's strong association with Moscow's pro-Arab stance.

As the party's hard-line elements sought to use this

Gomulka's unorthodox agricultural policies but to condemn Chinese "communes," joint Polish-Soviet opposition to Chinese views had become more explicit.

In recent years, Gomulka's public support for Soviet policies on China has grown in proportion to his increasing conviction that a reconciliation between Moscow and the present Chinese leadership is impossible. Nevertheless, his fear of the consequences for Poland and for his regime of a formal Sino-Soviet split have made him not only hold back from denouncing Peking for specific ideological sins, but consistently to stall or modify any incipient Soviet moves to read the Chinese party out of the Communist movement.

Gomulka's growing conviction that the Sino-Soviet dispute is irreconcilable has also impelled him to try to head off any Soviet attempt to reassert its primacy in Eastern Europe. As recently as his Pravda article of 29 October, Gomulka dealt authoritatively with the proposed international Communist conference. He reasserted the principle of unity within diversity, arguing that differences among Communist parties resulting from specific local conditions should not prevent unity on matters of principle, specifically on the "struggle against imperialism, security of socialist states, and defense of peace." For the first time, however, he added that even Sino-Soviet differences on the question of war and peace should not be permitted to threaten unity or preclude adherence to "proletarian internationalism."

Gomulka thus hopes that multilateral Communist conclaves this year will be able to establish unity on the lowest common denominator of "basic principles," but leave individual parties with the right to their own views on specific problems. His views have been echoed by the Hungarian and Czechoslovak parties, but in effect have been rejected by the East German party, which continues to advocate a Stalinist concept of unity from the top.

NATIONALISTIC THREAT TO UNITY

"Neither the specific features of the historical development of the individual peoples of socialist countries nor ideological differences existing among the Communist and workers parties of these countries threaten the foundations of unity.... Individual parties can have differing opinions, for instance, on the question of war and peace.... These viewpoints...cannot hamper the organization of unity of all socialist parties against the aggressive undertakings of imperialism...in Vietnam, for instance.

"Nevertheless, everyone knows that the present Chinese Communist Party leadership categorically rejects any and all proposals on cooperation in the defense of the Vietnamese peoples, that it has withdrawn from the principles of internationalism, and in fact, has caused a split in the socialist camp.

"The source of all this...is nationalism.... All parties of the socialist countries must decisively fight against national isolation and nationalism...as the main obstacles on the road to their unity and reciprocity."

Gomulka article in Pravda
29 October 1967

with jubilant crowds
in 1956

facing a sullen population
in 1967

WLADYSLAW GOMULKA

Secretary General of the Polish Workers Party (PPR)
November 1943 to September 1948

First Secretary of the Polish United Workers
Party (PZPR)
October 1956 to ?

69216 1-68 CIA

25X1

situation to their own advantage, they raised doubt in Gomulka's mind about the loyalty of the party's Jewish segment. Interior Minister Moczar's apparatus also apparently leaked much information on general dissatisfaction with Gomulka's pro-Soviet policy, probably in an effort to generate doubts in Moscow about Gomulka's continued ability to control the situation.

Gomulka recognized almost immediately the threat to his carefully fostered factional balance, and the attempt to impair his image in the eyes of Moscow. Efforts to counteract this dual threat can be seen in most of the personnel changes Gomulka has made since June, including the dismissal of several ranking military officers.

Currently, there is evidence that Gomulka has succeeded, at least temporarily, in reasserting his control of the interplay of factional forces within the party. Continuing low-level personnel changes indicate, however, that the trouble is far from over, and that Gomulka may have to make political compromises before he can make more significant shifts and thus achieve a new intraparty equilibrium in coming months.

Outlook

In terms of the goals he set for himself and for the Polish party in 1956, Gomulka can take satisfaction in having achieved an equitable relationship with the USSR, helped to establish new principles of intra-Communist relations, contributed to Polish security, and enhanced Poland's role in the international arena. The very process of achieving these goals, however, has unleashed forces of diversity beyond Gomulka's original expectations. His recent attempts to guide these forces into acceptable channels probably will further tarnish his reputation as a nationalist innovator at home and abroad.

At home, Gomulka's policies will increase the party leadership's isolation from the party masses and the people. The younger generation in particular fears that Gomulka's commitment to the Soviet Union is leading not only to an abandonment of Poland's international interests, but to further retrenchment and rigidity in domestic policies.

Within the party, various forces will constantly be alert to exploit instances of anti-Soviet nationalism and Gomulka's reactions to them. In the long run, Gomulka probably will be less concerned over the opportunistic nationalism displayed by the hard-line elements and by some groups within the military than over similar sentiments rooted in the moderate mass of his supporters. Most of these persons, like Gomulka, favor a close relationship with Moscow. They are

likely to be increasingly fearful, however, that Gomulka's overreaction to diversity in Eastern Europe will lead the Polish party to lose by default the leverage that it has so laboriously acquired vis-a-vis the USSR, as well as to demean its own nationalist heritage.

Although Gomulka is still able to control these views within the party, they are sufficiently close to those of the majority of educated Poles to represent the single most significant threat to the stability of his regime. Whether he will continue to be successful in stifling these sentiments will depend in large measure on his ability to generate greater acceptance for his belief in the basic identity of Polish and Soviet national interests.

The unanswered question now facing Gomulka is whether future developments in East-West relations, as well as developments within the Communist movement, will undermine this apparent identity of Polish and Soviet interests. The Polish leader's warnings against the threat of narrow nationalism to common Communist interests thus are in part expressions of his concern over a possible future change in Soviet policy at Poland's expense.

Gomulka probably recognizes that Moscow faces a growing dilemma in reconciling the existing theory of party relations with the reality of conflicting national interests. He calculates that any Soviet attempt to reassert primacy throughout the movement would probably be both ineffective and counterproductive. Gomulka therefore is attempting to lead Moscow to accept somewhat looser principles of interparty relations, a formula that balances national self-assertion with the Communist solidarity characteristic of his own brand of national Communism since 1956. In the long run, however, it is doubtful that the splintering effects of disparate national interests within the Communist world can be contained.

25X1

* * *

Secret

Secret